

# Favorite Stories and Mysteries

## A Sinking Mystery, The *Benjamin Noble*

We recently received a link from Tom Eisenhardt describing the sinking of the ship, *Benjamin Noble*, that was lost in a storm on Lake Superior almost exactly 100 years ago. The young captain, John Eisenhardt, and his crew were lost with the ship. An article in the Escanaba Michigan Morning Press Newspaper (May 3, 1914) reported on the search for the bodies of Captain Eisenhardt and the crew members, which were never located. According to the article, Capt. Eisenhardt was from Milwaukee Wisconsin, and Tom wondered if anyone had information about Capt. John and his family.



A little research revealed that there were several Eisenhardt families living in Milwaukee at the turn of the last century. Census information from the 1910 Census found John, age 26, steamboat captain, and his sister Margaret age 28 living with some cousins in Milwaukee. The national origin columns revealed that the siblings were born in Wisconsin, but that their father was born in Denmark. The 1880 Census listed George Eisenhardt "vessel captain", his wife Mary who was born in Cologne (presumably Germany), and daughter Maggie, age 10 months, living in Milwaukee. George reported that he was born in Denmark. Capt. John was born in 1883, and since the 1890 Census was destroyed in a fire, we have no further information on his exact date of birth. His mother Mary died in 1888 and is buried in Milwaukee. His father George shows up on several Milwaukee city directories before 1890, but not after that. He is not listed in the Wisconsin Death Records and is not buried beside Mary, so he may have ended his life elsewhere. Naturalization records show that George Eisenhardt became a US citizen in 1879. At that time he stated that his residence was in Milwaukee, that he was born in

Denmark in 1847, and that he emigrated in 1864, arriving at the Port of NY in June. I found Capt. John's sister Margaret on the 1900 Census living with an aunt who was born in Germany, possibly her mother Mary's sister? I was unable to locate Capt. John in 1900.

Eisenhardts from Denmark are an as yet unexplored family twig. Presumably they were ethnic Germans since the surname would be different written in Danish. There are a number of Eisenhardts living in Denmark today, and there is a record of the baptism of Julius Owe Eisenhardt, born 26 May 1847, in the town of Aalborg Denmark. The parents were Johann Christopher Eisenhardt and wife Cecille Holm. This couple married in Aalborg in 1835 and baptized a number of children over a 15 year period. Son Johann Rudolph Eisenhardt was born in 1837. Records show that Johann Eisenhardt, born in 1837 in Denmark, emigrated through the Port of New York in 1862 having traveled on a German ship. He listed his occupation as "Seeman" or sailor. It is possible that this was George's brother — this family apparently had sailing in their family history. George may have changed his name from Julius when he emigrated, but this is obviously speculative and more research is needed.

Capt. John was newly married at the time of his death, and apparently had no children, but he did have relatives in Milwaukee.

**Anyone with information about Capt. John's family or Eisenhardts of Danish ancestry is invited to share it with us.**

To read more about this story and view actual photographs of the ship wreck click on this link: [John Eisenhardt - Benjamin Noble Shipwreck](#)

Once again, thank you to Tom Eisenhardt of the South Jersey Eisenhardts for bringing us this story.